



Department of Justice

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AWARDS \$3.6 MILLION TO RHODE ISLAND TO SUPPORT CRIME VICTIMS

The U.S. Department of Justice has awarded the State of Rhode Island \$3,633,000 for crime victim programs: \$1,941,000 to finance the state's victim compensation program and \$1,692,000 for victim assistance initiatives. The funds come from the federal Crime Victims Fund, which is financed by assessments and fines paid by federal criminal offenders. The Justice Department's Office of Justice Programs' (OJP) Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) announced the award today.

"The Justice Department is pleased to support both the collection efforts for the Crime Victims Fund, which provides these program dollars, and the allocation of these resources to help Rhode Island's crime victims," said OJP Assistant Attorney General Deborah J. Daniels.

Victim Compensation

Rhode Island's victim compensation program receives annual grants equal to 60 percent of its total payout to crime victims in a previous year. The Compensation program provides reimbursement to, or on behalf of, crime victims for expenses resulting from their victimization, such as medical costs, mental health counseling, funeral and burial costs, and lost wages. The program is administered by the Rhode Island General Treasurer's Office.

Victim Assistance

Rhode Island uses the crime victim assistance funds to support state and local victim assistance and advocacy initiatives, including the Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Sexual Assault and Trauma Resource Center, and Justice Assistance. The funds are administered by the Rhode Island Justice Commission.

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“These grants play a critical role in aiding crime victims in Rhode Island, be it through direct victim support or through community-based efforts that provide care and comfort,” said OVC Director John W. Gillis.

Money for these annual awards comes from the Crime Victims Fund, which is financed by fines and assessments pay by federal criminal offenders, not by tax dollars. Fines are collected by United States Attorneys, the U.S. Courts and the Bureau of Prisons. Fines collected in one year are deposited into the Fund and are available for grant awards the following year.

In Rhode Island, the U.S. Attorney’s Financial Litigation Unit pursues the collection of fines and assessments from federal offenders prosecuted in the district. In Fiscal 2002, which ended September 30, the Financial Litigation Unit collected \$774,171 in criminal assessments, fines, and restitution.

Victim Witness Coordinator

More than 90 percent of Crime Victim Fund deposits are distributed annually by OVC to states and territories to support state victim compensation and victim assistance programs. Remaining funds are used for such purposes as training and technical assistance, and national demonstration projects. These funds also support victim witness coordinator and advocate positions for U.S. Attorney Offices, victim specialist positions in the FBI and a federal victim notification system. The Victim Witness Coordinator in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Rhode Island is Office is Gale E. James.

“Gale James does an outstanding job working with victims in the federal criminal justice system. She also works closely with her colleagues in the state system,” U.S. Attorney Margaret E. Curran said. “Thanks to Gale James's compassionate and extremely competent assistance, Rhode Islanders victimized by federal crime can be assured that they have a champion with them at every step of what can be a very difficult and emotional process.”

“This money from the federal government – at no cost to taxpayers – helps state crime victims in Rhode Island get the help and attention they need, “U.S. Attorney Curran added.

Additional information about the state’s Victim Compensation Program can be obtained from the General Treasurer’s Office at 222-8590. For information about state victim assistance initiatives in Rhode Island, contact the Rhode Island Justice Commission at 222-4498.

Additional information about the Crime Victims Fund and the Office of Victims of Crime is available at OJP’s Office of Communications at 202-307-0703 or at the OJP Web site, www.ojp.usdoj.gov.